

Heat Relief Network

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: What is the Heat Relief Network?

A: The Heat Relief Network was formed as a response to a heat wave in 2005 that resulted in more than 30 deaths among people experiencing homelessness in the Maricopa region. The Heat Relief Network is a voluntary partnership made up of service providers, faith-based groups, local governments, Native nations, businesses, and agencies. These partners mobilize to provide cooling centers, water and refuge from the intense Arizona heat for anyone needing heat relief in the region. Network participants also can serve as donation centers to collect bottled water, sun block, lip balm, hats, toiletries, and other resources for heat relief partners. The Heat Relief Network is open to agencies or organizations wanting to join.

Q: What is the goal of the Heat Relief Network?

A: The goal of the Heat Relief Network is to help prevent heat-related deaths. We work each year to expand the network throughout the region so that vulnerable populations are never far from obtaining water or refuge from the heat. The Heat Relief Network:

- Creates a network of collaborative partners throughout the region providing cooling center locations and hydration stations during the heat of the summer.
- Provides resources and assistance to people experiencing homelessness, older adults, homebound persons, and other vulnerable populations.
- Educates the public on the dangers of heat; and help prevent heat-related deaths and illnesses.

Q: What is the role of the Maricopa Association of Governments in the HRN?

A: The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) coordinates with new and returning partners to compile and update Heat Relief locations, contact information, and hours of operation. This information is used to create an interactive map and printable directories, which are available on the [MAG website](#). The map and directories are updated as new partners sign up throughout the summer season, which runs May 1 to September 30. MAG also shares updates and information about excessive heat warnings, as declared by the National Weather Service, to an email list of more than 500 contacts wishing to receive updates from the Heat Relief Network.



The interactive map and printable directories show:

- **Collection/Donation Sites:** Water bottles can be donated here for use at cooling center locations and hydration stations. Some sites also accept other donations such as clothing, hats and toiletries.
- **Cooling Centers:** Cooled indoor locations that provide refuge from the heat during the day. Drinking fountains or bottled water is available.
- **Hydration Station Sites:** Locations where individuals can go to receive bottled water and other collected donated items. These can be indoors or outdoors.
- **Emergency Heat Relief Stations:** Locations offering hydration and indoor refuge from the heat. Open during excessive heat warnings issued by the National Weather Service. Pets are welcome, but must be leashed.

Q: What is the role of the Heat Relief Network partner?

A: Once signed up as a location offering heat relief, the partnering agency is responsible for coordinating with other organizations to obtain, distribute, transport or store water and/or other donations. Cooling centers and hydration stations in need of bottled water are encouraged to utilize the Heat Relief Network map and directories to contact network partners for water donations.

Heat Relief Network partners are responsible for keeping their information up to date with the Heat Relief Network throughout the summer.

Q: How do I become a Heat Relief Network partner?

A: Agencies or organizations wishing to become a Heat Relief Network partner are invited to complete a submission form for each location offering heat relief. Only public or nonprofit locations will be accepted and shown on the map/directories. Private residences will not be accepted. Once the submission form is submitted and approved, your location will be added to the interactive map and printable directory.

Q: How often are the map and directories updated?

A: Once submission forms are received and the information is confirmed, the interactive map and directories are updated within 24 hours. New locations and updates to existing locations are accepted from May 1 through September 30 each year.

Q: Where are the Heat Relief map and directories available?

A: The Heat Relief map is available on the MAG website at www.azmag.gov/heatrelief. Agencies may share the link to the MAG website, or reference the map link on their websites.

Q: Why is the Heat Relief Network important?

A: The ultimate goal of the Heat Relief Network is to help prevent heat-related deaths and illnesses. Heat-related deaths tragically underscore the importance of recognizing the dangers of extreme heat.

July is typically the most deadly month in Arizona when it comes to heat-caused deaths. The high daytime temperatures, coupled with the high nighttime temperatures, makes this time of year very dangerous. The high night temperatures do not allow for the body to cool down, and can result in more people being at risk.

According to the National Weather Service, the Phoenix area averages 110 days of temperatures above 100 degrees. It is important to be protected from the dangers of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Prolonged exposed to heat can affect anyone. Even healthy people should take precautions during extremely high temperatures. Vulnerable populations such as older adults, children, people who are experiencing homelessness, and those who work outdoors need to take extra precautions.

Q: What are some important tips to avoid heat-related illness?

A: Some tips to avoid heat-related illness are:

- ✓ Increase fluid intake, regardless of activity level. Staying hydrated is extremely important.
- ✓ Limit exercise or outdoor activity between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- ✓ When outdoors, wear a sunscreen with a minimum SPF 15 and reapply often. Wear a hat, lightweight clothing, and sunglasses.
- ✓ Rest frequently in shady or cool areas to give the body's temperature a chance to recover and cool down.
- ✓ Never leave children, disabled adults, or pets inside a parked vehicle.
- ✓ Respectfully check on elderly neighbors to ensure their air conditioning is working and in use. Take advantage of free air-conditioning by visiting locations like shopping malls, the library, or other heat refuge locations provided on the Heat Relief Network map.

Q: What can people do if they want to help?

A: Recognize the dangers of extreme heat and seek help when needed.

- Call 9-1-1 if you encounter an emergency.
- Donate bottled water, or toiletries to any of the regional collection sites listed on the interactive map.
- Help to educate your friends and neighbors on the dangers of extreme heat and tips to avoid heat-related illness.
- Check on your elderly neighbors to ensure they are staying cool.

For additional information on regional heat relief efforts, please contact Tina Lopez at tlopez@azmag.gov or call 602-254-6300.